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ABSTRACT

The values and goals of students from Harcum Junior College (Pennsylvania) a private, resident, all female college, were compared with students from Harrisburg Area Community College (Pennsylvania) a public, non-resident, co-ed college. The two groups of students were compared in terms of their parents' educational background, their educational goals, their most valued college experiences, and their most disappointing college experiences. It was found that although Harcum student's parents have a higher educational level, there were no significant differences between the two groups of students in the ranking of nine educational goals. Neither group associated the more personal goals with their formal schooling. In terms of frequency of selection, the most valued experience categories for Harcum students were all directly concerned with academic matters. The most valued experience categories selected by Harrisburg students included personal experiences as well as those relating to academic matters. There were differences between the two groups in their ranking of the major disappointing experiences categories, however, both groups expressed disappointment in their fellow-students and social and organizational activities. (CA)

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Educational Goals and Selected College-Related Valuations of Public and Private Junior College Students

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1. In 1969, Harrisburg Area Community College (Snyder, 1969) issued a comprehensive report reflecting a description of the self-reported characteristics, attitudes and concerns of their students; Spring 1969. Respondents to their questionnaire were 1047; of which approximately 70% were male. Also, only 28% were aged 18 and 19, the remaining 72% being 20 years or older; approximately 74% were part-time and 26% full-time students. There were no resident students.

2. In the Spring of 1971 a questionnaire survey was conducted among 630 Harcum students; all female, and 100% of them younger than 20 years. Paralleling several elements of the Harrisburg survey, this study sought to ascertain similarities and contrasts in the views of these two junior college populations: one public, non-resident, and co-educational; the other private, 70% resident and all-female. Specifically, this comparison inquiry related to (1) their educational goals; (2) most valued; and (3) most disappointing college-related experiences.

3. As Snyder notes, "The educational level of parents of these (Harrisburg) students was similar to that found in other community colleges (American Council on Education, 1967); and, as one would expect, parental educational levels are below those found in students in four-year colleges and universities (Austin, 1965, 15)." The contrasts with the parents of the Harcum students are revealed in Table 1. All figures are rounded-off to the nearest whole number.

Table 1:- Distribution of Selected Levels of Education for Parents

LEVEL	Mothers		Fathers	
	Harcum	Harrisburg	Harcum	Harrisburg
Completed 8 grades or Less	0%	12%	0%	16%
Attended high school	1%	18%	1%	19%
High school graduates	67%	54%	35%	40%
Received bachelor or adv.degrees	31%	5%	61%	12%

4. For both mothers and fathers, the levels of schooling for the parents of the Harcum 1970 freshmen were consistently higher than among the Harrisburg parents; morenearly approximating those found among the parents of four-year college students. Specifically:

(1) "At the lower level, nearly one-third of the mothers and somewhat more than one-third of the fathers of students (Harrisburg) did not graduate from high school." (Snyder, 1969). For the Harcum sample, only 1% of the mothers and fathers did not graduate high school.

(2) "At the upper level, just over 4 percent of the mothers and about 12% of the fathers had earned a bachelor's or higher degree." (Snyder, 1969). For the Harcum sample about one-third of the mothers and 6 out of each 10 fathers had earned these degrees.

(3) For the Harrisburg group of parents, "Whereas the mothers are somewhat more educated than fathers at the lower levels (did not graduate from high school), they are less well-educated at the upper levels (attended college or received college degrees). Essentially, these data trace the national pattern in which males tend more to drop out at the secondary school than females, but higher education is held to be more important for males than for females. (Havighurst and Neugarten, 1967, pp. 74, 75, 98)." (Snyder 1969).

(4) Among the Harcum group of mothers a greater percentage earned bachelor or advanced degrees than did the Harrisburg group of mothers or fathers. This same fact also applies to the Harcum group of fathers.

(5) Six times as many Harcum group mothers earned bachelor or advanced degrees as did Harrisburg group mothers, and five times as many Harcum group fathers earned bachelor or advanced degrees as did the Harrisburg group of fathers.

Educational Goals

5. The students themselves at both Harcum and Harrisburg "were asked to rate each of nine educational goals as either being 'essential,' 'important,' of some importance' or 'of little importance.' The goals were adapted from a national list of general educational goals (United States President's Commission for Higher Education, 1947)" (Snyder 1969). Their ratings are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2:- Ratings of Educational Goals as "Essential" or "Important"

Educational Goal	Percent	
	Harcum	Harrisburg
1. Developing my mind and thinking ability	73	98
2. Obtaining vocational or professional training	99	91
3. Learning how to enjoy life	72	81
4. Earning a higher income	61	78
5. Developing my personality	84	73
6. Developing moral standards	48	68
7. Making a desirable marriage	47	64
8. Developing a satisfying philosophy	52	61
9. Becoming a cultured person	86	56
Average	69	74

6. Table 2 reveals the following facts:

(1) At the very least, a majority of the Harrisburg respondents considered each of these nine goals to be either "essential" or "important," with virtually the entire group rating development of mental ability most highly.

(2) In contrast, among the Harcum group, less than a majority considered either "Developing moral standards" or "Making a desirable marriage" as either an "important" or "essential" educational goal, with the greatest majority (99%) singling out "Obtaining vocational or professional training."

7. It is noted that an average of 69% of the Harcum group valued the 9 fixed-choice educational goals as either "Essential" or "Important;" with an average of 74% of the Harrisburg group so indicating. Is this a 'significant' difference? Probably the most common problem in educational research is to determine whether two samples differ sufficiently in a characteristic to discredit the hypothesis that the samples are from populations similar in the characteristics chosen for comparison, (in this case the 9 fixed-choice educational goals).

8. The purpose of a test of significance (in this case the Chi-square test) is always to determine the probability that an observed difference between two independent samples could result from the fluctuations of random sampling, or so-called "sampling errors." To accept the "null hypothesis" is to conclude that the observed difference is due to chance (the fluctuations of random sampling, or "sampling errors"). To reject the "null hypothesis" is to conclude that the observed difference is a "real" one; i.e. not due to chance.

9. To determine if the obtained difference between the averages of these two groups was likely to be a chance or true one, the Chi-Square test was utilized:

$$X^2 = \left[\frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}\right]$$

where

X^2 = Chi-square formula for testing agreement between observed & expected results

f_o = Frequency of occurrence of observed facts

f_e = frequency of occurrence on some hypothesis

$X^2 = 20.7$ with a probability or $P = > .01$.

10. The primary objective of statistical inference is to enable us to generalize from a sample to some larger population of which the sample is a part. Speaking literally, there is never any absolute certainty in science. All conclusions drawn from experiments contain an element of risk. What the Chi-square test permits one to state, quite precisely, is the extent of this risk. In this instance it may be stated that there is less than one chance in 100 that the observed difference in averages between the two groups might have occurred through "sampling errors." We therefore

believe, with a high level of inferred confidence, that the observed difference is a "real" one (i.e. "significant"). We consequently conclude that a greater percentage of public junior college students identify with this 9 forced-choice educational valuation than do private junior college students.

11. The range of educational goals selections among the Harcum group was from 47% to 99% or 52. For the Harrisburg it was 56% to 98% or 42. Is this observed difference 'significant;' i.e. what is the probability that this observed difference might have occurred simply through chance fluctuations? Stated conversely, what is the probability that this difference is a "real" one; i.e. not a "sampling error" variation? The Chi-square test for this data revealed a chi-square ($\overline{X^2}$) = 1.38 with a probability or P = .25 It was therefore concluded, since the probability level of confidence was not .05 or less, that the observed difference between these two groups was not statistically significant; i.e. 25 times out of 100 such a difference might arise through chance variations. Therefore it was considered that no significant difference was found in the range of educational goals selections.

12. Table 3 below reflects the ranking of these educational goals; listed in descending order of frequency of selection for the Harcum group.

Table 3:- Ranking of Educational Goals Valued "Essential" or "Important"

Educational Goal	Ranking	
	Harcum	Harrisburg
1. Obtaining vocational or professional training	1	2
2. Becoming a cultured person	2	9
3. Developing my personality	3	5
4. Developing my mind and thinking ability	4	1
5. Learning how to enjoy life	5	3
6. Earning a higher income	6	4
7. Developing a satisfying philosophy	7	8
8. Developing moral standards	8	6
9. Making a desirable marriage	9	7

13. Table 3 reveals some interesting similarities and contrasts:

(1) With the exception of "Becoming a cultured person" (for the Harrisburg group), both groups selected the same goals to be among their "top-5." In general, both groups apparently priority-value the same goals - this despite the fact that demographically, one group is 70% male and the other 100% female: one group is 100% below age 20 and the other 72% above 20.

(2) It is further noted that both groups rank among their relatively "low" educational goals priority-valuations; marriage, development of moral standards, and developing a personally satisfying philosophy. This would suggest that both groups do not associate these personal 'achievements' with their formal schooling-education.

Value-Disappointing Experiences

14. As Snyder (1969) noted, "Respondents were asked to describe the experience(s) at H.A.C.C. which they valued most, and the experience(s) at H.A.C.C. which they found most disappointing. These were coded into 26 categories." (of which 21 were compared with the responses of the Harcum group). "The .... categories include aspects of administration, student activities, classes, counseling, college environment, instructors and instruction, students, and other areas. These are summarized in the following Table, for both groups; rank-listed in descending order of frequency-of-selection by the Harcum group.

Table 4:- Categories of Valued Experiences, By Order of Frequency

Category	Rank	
	Harcum	Harrisburg
1. Classes and courses	1	3
2. Instructors, interaction with student	2	4
3. Instructors, generally	3	7
4. Instruction, generally	4	9
5. Learning opportunity	5	1
6. Instructors, attitudes	6	16.5
7. Instructors, academic advisement	7	10.5
8. Students, long hair, hippies, etc.	8	16.5
9. Specific personal experiences	9	5
10. Friendly atmosphere	10	18.5
11. Sports	11	15
12. Counseling	12	12.5
13. Housing and transportation	13	18.5
14. Students, social interaction	14	2
15. Part-time work activities	15	14
16. Student Newspaper	16	20.5
17. Students, attitudes and behaviors	17	10.5
18. Administration, administrators	18	12.5
19. Social, club, organizational activities	19	6
20. Students, school spirit and participation	20	20.5
21. Student freedoms to behave	21	8

15. In terms of frequency of selection, the 7 top-valued categories for Harcum students were all concerned, directly, with academic matters: the instructors, learning opportunity and classes/courses. In contrast, among the Harrisburg students their 7 top-ranked categories included not only academically-oriented categories, but also, personal experiences, social interaction with students, and college co-curricular activities. As Snyder (1969) notes, with reference to the Harrisburg group:

"The opportunities to learn, to interact with others interested in learning, and to interact socially, appear very important to our students."

16. Once again, we pose the question - is this a 'significant' difference, or is it more likely to simply reflect a c' nce fluctuation? The Chi-square test was applied to the average of the assigned rankings for the top-seven selections among the Harcum group, as contrasted with the average of the assigned rankings for these same categories by the Harrisburg students. The Chi-square was 1.43, with a probability or P = .23. The probability level of confidence was not .05 or less, (the so-called 5 per cent level of confidence; the convention or arbitrary agreement which stipulates that the obtained Chi-square is "significant" when it could arise by chance only 5% of the time). It was therefore concluded that the observed difference in ranking patterns of these two groups was not statistically significant; i.e. 23 times out of 100 such a difference might arise through chance fluctuations alone - not "real" differences.

17. The individual, "major," (10-or-more rank-order) differences noted between these two groups were the following categories:

Harcum-ranked		Harrisburg-ranked
6th	Instructors, attitudes	16.5th
14th	Students, social interaction	2 nd
19th	Social, club, organizational activities	6th
21st	Student freedoms to behave	8th

18. Paragraphs 15 and 16 above suggest that the "most valued" college-related experiences among the Harcum students are more consistently academically-oriented; with a higher-level of social interaction being valued by the Harrisburg group. This ranking pattern also reveals that the Harcum students, as a group, assign low-to-very-low "most valued" rankings to social interaction with students; college co-curricular activities; and student freedoms to behave. (The very last item noted undoubtedly reflects, in part, the fact that Harcum is predominantly a resident college; 70% - Harrisburg a day-commuter learning center).

19. The final area of inquiry-comparison was that of ranking those college-related experiences which they found to be "most disappointing." They are summarized in the following table, for both groups; ranked in descending order of frequency-of-selection by the Harcum group.

Table 5:- Categories of "Most Disappointing" Experiences

Category	Rank	
	Harcum	Harrisburg
1. Student freedoms to behave	1	25
2. Administration, administrators	2	13
3. Students, attitudes and behaviors	3	2
4. Social, club, organizational activities	4	6
5. Students, social interaction	5	21
6. Counseling	6	19
7. Student Newspaper	7	23
8. Part-time work activities	8	16
9. Students, school spirit and participation	9	3
10. Housing and transportation	10	13
11. Specific personal experiences	11	1
12. Instructors, academic advisement	12	11
13. Sports	13	10
14. Unfriendly atmosphere	14	17.5
15. Instructors, attitudes	15	17.5
16. Classes and courses	16	4
17. Instructors, interaction with students	17	23
18. Instruction, generally	18	8
19. Instructors, generally	19	5
20. Students, long hair, hippies, etc.	20	20
21. Learning opportunity	21	24

Note: Rankings beyond 21 are included for the Harrisburg group as their responses were grouped into 26 categories.

20. For the Harcum population, quite consistent with their expressed "most valued" ranking of "Student freedoms to behave"; it being ranked #21 (least valued); it was also ranked #1 as "Most disappointing." Similarly, for the Harrisburg group, this category ranked well-up among the more valued experiences (#8), and also ranked least (#25) among the "Most disappointing" experiences. In general, this same relatively-consistent pattern is noted among the first-9-ranked "Most disappointing" experiences for the Harcum group.

21. To be entirely consistent, a one-to-one "high-low" ranking within each group, should have resulted from their "most valued" and "most disappointing" evaluations; i.e., if "Classes and courses" were ranked #1 as the most frequently selected 'valued' experience, it should then logically also be ranked #21 (or least) among the list of items considered from the viewpoint of "most disappointing" experiences. Realistically, however, this was not the case - for either group. The degree to which such "matching" occurred is summarized in the following composite table for both the Harcum and Harrisburg groups.

Table 6:- Combined categories of "Most Valued" & "Most Disappointing" Experiences

Harcum		Category	Harrisburg	
Valued	Disapp.		Valued	Disapp.
1	16	Classes and courses	3	4
2	17	Instructors, interaction with students	4	23
3	19	Instructors, generally	7	5
4	18	Instruction, generally	9	8
5	21	Learning opportunity	1	24
6	15	Instructors, attitudes	16.5	17.5
7	12	Instructors, academic advisement	10.5	11
8	20	Students, long hair, hippies, etc.	16.5	20
9	11	Specific personal experiences	5	1
10	14	Friendly atmosphere (unfriendly)*	18.5	17.5
11	13	Sports	15	10
12	6	Counseling	12.5	19
13	10	Housing & transportation	18.5	13
14	5	Students, social interaction	2	21
15	8	Part-time work activities	14	16
16	7	Student newspaper	20.5	23
17	3	Students, attitudes and behavior	10.5	2
18	2	Administration, administrators	12.5	13
19	4	Social, Club, organizational activities	6	6
20	9	Students, school spirit, and participation	20.5	3
21	1	Student freedoms to behave	8	25

* For "most disappointing"

22. Scanning Table 6, there appears to be a greater consistency in the Harcum group than among the Harrisburg students. In general, where the Harcum group places a high value on a category (i.e. a low-number ranking), they also rank the category as a high-number or 'least' among their "most disappointing" experiences. In contrast, in the following specific instances, there appears to be inconsistency in the expressed attitudes of the Harrisburg group, as reflected in ranking these categories both as "most valued" and "most disappointing" college-related experiences. It would have been most revealing to seek to ascertain why, for example, "Classes and courses" were highly ranked among "Most valued" experiences, yet at the same time were also highly ranked among the "Most disappointing" college-related experiences.

Most Valued-ranking	Category	Most disappointing ranking
3	Classes & courses	4
7	Instructors, generally	5
9	Instruction, generally	8
16.5	Instructors, attitudes	17.5
10.5	Instructors, academic advisement	11
12.5	Administrators, administration	13
6	Social, club, organizational activities	6
18.5	Friendly (unfriendly) atmosphere	17.5

23. In summary, this comparison survey of educational goals and selected college-related valuations among a group of 1047 students; 70% male; 72% 20 years or older; 74% part-time; 100% non-residents; in attendance at a public junior college - along with a group of 630 students; 100% female; 100% younger than 20 years; 100% full-time; 70% residents; in attendance at a private, independent junior college; revealed that:

(1) there was a marked difference in the educational level of formal schooling completed by their parents; six times as many Harcum group mothers earned bachelor or advanced degrees in comparison with the Harrisburg group mothers, and five times as many Harcum group fathers earned bachelor or advanced degrees as did the Harrisburg group of fathers.

(2) Regarding educational goals, with two minor exceptions, at least 50% of both groups identified themselves with each of the more forced-choices listed; the greatest percentage (98%) of the Harrisburg group selecting: "Developing my mind and thinking ability," and the greatest percentage (97%) of the Harcum group selecting, "Obtaining vocational or professional training." In this connection, it has been noted, (Blai, 1969) that "During the past decade, it has become increasingly evident to college administrators, faculty and guidance counselors, that more and more students are viewing their college education as a means for acquiring some future, direct, material gain or reward. The very strong emphasis on course grades which seems to be shared by students and faculty; the fierce competition for admissions to graduate schools; the increasing clamor that courses be geared to the 'practical life' situations rather than being directed to the cultural (liberal arts) enrichment of the individual; all seem to suggest that the college years are viewed by many students not so much as a means for becoming a more concerned and knowledgeable citizen, but rather as a means for acquiring a better (material) position in life; a 'good' job, a high salary; prestige, power, status, etc." (A survey in 1968 among some 530 Harcum students revealed at that time that the greatest percentage (91%) selected "To prepare for an occupation" as a motive for attending college, closely followed by "To acquire more knowledge" (90%) as a corrolary motive).

(3) A statistically significant higher percentage (74%) of the Harrisburg group identified with the 9-forced-choice educational goals listed than did the Harcum group (64%).

(4) No statistically significant difference was found in the observed differences in range of educational goals selections between these two groups.

(5) With one minor exception, both groups selected the same "5-top" educational goals:

A - Obtaining vocational or professional training
B - Becoming a cultured person
C - Developing my personality
D - Developing my mind and thinking ability
E - Learning how to enjoy life

(6) Both groups rank as "low" educational goals:

F - Making a desirable marriage
G - Developing moral standards
H - Developing a satisfying philosophy

This suggests that this sizeable sample of young collegians do not associate among their more important educational goals these evidences of personal 'achievement.'

(7) Among 21 categories of college-related experiences, the "top-7" most valued categories of college-related experiences selected by the Harcum group were all related, directly, with academic matters: whereas among the Harrisburg group they also included personal experiences, social interaction with students, and college co-curricular activities:

Harcum		Harrisburg
I	Classes and courses	III
II	Instructors, interaction with students	IV
III	Instructors, generally	VII
IV	Instruction, generally	
V	Learning opportunity	I
VI	Instructors, attitudes	
VII	Instructors, academic advisement	
		II - Students, social interaction
		V - Specific personal experiences
		VI- Social, club, organizational activities

This difference in ranking patterns of the two groups was not found to be a 'real' or statistically significant one.

(8) Major (10-or-more rank-order) differences noted between the two groups were:

Harcum-ranked		Harrisburg-ranked
6th	Instructors, attitudes	16.5th
14th	Students, social interaction	2nd
19th	Social, club, organizational activities	6th
21st	Student freedoms to behave	8th

(9) Items (7) and (8) above reveal that the "most valued" college-related experiences among the Harcum group is consistently academically-oriented; with a higher level of social interaction being valued by the Harrisburg students. This ranking pattern further reveals that the Harcum students, as a group, assign low-to-very low "most valued" rankings to social interaction with students; college co-curricular activities; and student freedoms to behave.

(1) Considerable divergence is noted among these two groups in the "top-7" ranking of "most disappointing" experiences:

Harcum	Harrisburg
I - Student freedoms to behave	
II - Administrators, administration	
III - Students, attitudes and behaviors	II
IV - Social, Club and organization act.	VI
V - Students, social interaction	
VI - Counseling	
VII - Student newspaper	
	I - Specific personal experiences
	III - Students, school spirit & partic.
	IV - Classes & courses
	V - Instructors, generally
	VII - Students, disturbances & racial conflict

Both groups expressed disappointment in their fellow-students and social, club and organizational activities. Beyond these two areas, their major categories of disappointment are disparate.

(11) Despite marked demographic differences between these Harrisburg and Harcum student-populations, there evidently are considerably more similarities than differences between them in their educational goals and attitudes regarding selected college-related experiences.

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